For Immediate Release
October 13, 2003

Contacts:
Rhonda Spears (202) 861-6766
U.S. Conference of Mayors

Michael Maslansky (703) 358-0080
Luntz Research Companies

National Pollster, Frank Luntz, Addresses Mayors on First Responder Interoperability at U.S. Conference of Mayors Leadership Meeting in Miami

Releases New Luntz Research Poll: Americans Believe Emergency Responders Must Have TOTAL Interoperability During a Crisis

MIAMI – According to a new Luntz poll released Saturday, October 11, at the U.S. Conference of Mayors Leadership Meeting in Miami Beach, Americans expect and demand that their emergency first responders have all the resources, technology, and funding necessary to be completely interoperable.

The new poll, conducted by the Luntz Research Companies (LRC), found that 88% of the American people believe that it is either "absolutely necessary" or "very important" to "keep interoperability functioning at 100% during a crisis." Furthermore, if those systems are found lacking and emergency response suffers as a result, poll respondents indicated that they would hold their leaders accountable.

The findings of the Luntz poll also found:

➤ 73% of the country agrees that, *"The primary role of government is to protect the people from harm. If our leaders cannot guarantee that emergency response teams have the technology to meet disaster situations, they have not been doing their jobs."* (39% "strongly" agree).

➤ Two in three Americans (67%) agree that, *"If the technology exists to help first responders communicate more effectively with each other, the government should invest in the technology regardless of the cost."*

> ➢ <u>69%</u> of Americans are "totally " or "mostly" convinced that, *"greater interoperability between police, fire, and emergency services first responders would actually save lives."*

Hempstead (NY) Mayor James A. Garner, President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors said, "We continue to work with Secretary Ridge and the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and others to make sure that we build interoperable systems across our nation."

Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, Co-Chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors Homeland Security Taskforce said, "As last year's Rudman report noted, there already exist off-the-shelf technologies that can be deployed quickly and effectively to ensure interoperability. We need the resources to ensure that our first responders can do their job in a crisis."

Dr. Luntz discussed the findings at a mid-day session of the Conference of Mayors Leadership meeting. "The American people are sending a clear message to their elected officials," said Luntz. "Federal, state and local governments need to create interoperable communications regardless of the cost. If they don't, these officials will be held accountable in the event of another catastrophe."

The poll was commissioned by Nextel Communications, Inc. as a way to measure public opinion on the adequacy of improvements to public safety communications in the aftermath of September 11. The poll was designed to gauge public perceptions and opinions on the issue of emergency response capabilities, resources, and priorities. A total of 800 Americans were interviewed by telephone using traditional random digit dialing methodology for this poll. The margin of error for this survey was $\pm$3.5%. The sample was a cross-section of the American public.

To get the complete poll results, contact Michael Maslansky of Luntz Research Companies at (703) 358-0080 or visit the U.S. Conference of Mayors website at usmayors.org.

About the U.S. Conference of Mayors:
The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of the nation's 1183 cities with populations of 30,000 or more. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official - the mayor.

About The Luntz Research Companies:
The Luntz Research Companies is a nationally renowned survey research and corporate consulting firm based in Arlington, Virginia. More than a dozen Fortune 500 companies and several media outlets currently use Luntz Research services.

###